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Message Text

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17
ACTION MED-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-10

JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SNM-02 SY-05 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05

OES-03 OMB-01 DODE-00 HEW-02 SS-15 AID-05 IGA-01 /072 W
---------- 097562
R 180635Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2162

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SINGAPORE 1087

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR, SN, XX
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR SINGAPORE AMERICAN COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL
DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

FOR DG/MED

PASS ALSO NSC/SAODAP, HEW/NIDA, S/NM AND DOD/ASD (H&E)

REF: A. STATE 042917; B. SINGAPORE 0908

1. THE EMBASSY RECENTLY REPLIED IN REF B TO DEPARTMENT'S CIRCULAR (REF A) REQUESTING SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAMS FOR AMERICANS LIVING OVERSEAS. REF B PROVIDED A LOT OF STATISTICS ON OUR SACAC PROGRAM, BUT IT DOES NOT GIVE THE COMPLETE PICTURE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS PROGRAM. I WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY MY PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE DRUG SCENE IN SINGAPORE, THE POSITION OF THE LARGE AND GROWING AMERICAN COMMUNITY, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING THE OUTSTANDING WORK OF THE SINGAPORE AMERICAN COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE (SACAC).

2. IN 1973 WHEN SACAC WAS ESTABLISHED THE ONLY DRUGS READILY AVAILABLE

TO AMERICAN YOUTHS WERE MARIJUANA, MX PILLS, AND ALCOHOL. SINCE THEN NO. 3 HEROIN HAS FLOODED THE MARKET, AND THERE IS EVIDENCE
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THAT A SMALL NUMBER OF AMERICAN YOUTHS (PERHAPS AS MANY AS 40) HAVE

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BEGUN TO USE IT (THERE ARE MORE THAN 900 AMERICAN TEEN-AGERS IN
GRADES 7-12 IN SINGAPORE). HOWEVER, THE AMERICAN SCHOOL AUTHORITIES
AND SACAC ARE EXERTING THEIR EFFORTS TO PREVENT A HEROIN EPIDEMIC
FROM DEVELOPING ALONG THE LINES OF THE ONE WHICH OCCURRED IN BANGKOK
A FEW YEARS AGO. BUT THE POSSIBILITY OF FAILURE IS REAL.

3. SACAC ACTIVITIES ARE IN FULL SWING, LED BY THE VERY ABLE BOB
REYNOLDS WHO IS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT NARCOTIC MATTERS. HE IS AN EXPERT
COUNSELOR AND HE AND HIS ASSOCIATES HAVE COUNSELLED OVER 170 PERSONS
DURING THE PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS. REYNOLDS AND SACAC HAVE DEVELOPED
A GOOD "ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES" PROGRAM TO KEEP THE TEEN-AGERS FROM
GETTING BORED AND TURNING TO DRUGS. HIS OFFICE HAS ALSO INITIATED
A SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM WHICH PROVIDES JOBS FOR MORE THAN 130
AMERICAN YOUTHS DURING THE SUMMER VACATION.

4. THE BENEFITS OF THE SACAC PROGRAM CANNOT BE MEASURED. IT IS
POSSIBLE THAT LIVES HAVE BEEN SAVED, BUT THIS WILL NEVER BE KNOWN.
THE COMFORT TO PARENTS WHO HAVE SOMEONE TO TURN TO FOR PROBLEMS
THEY CANNOT BEGIN TO HANDLE THEMSELVES IS ALSO IMMEASURABLE. BUT
A GAUGE OF SACAC'S IMPORTANCE IS THE FACT THAT THE SPONSORING
ORGANIZATIONS HAVE DECIDED THAT THE PROGRAM SHOULD CONTINUE FOR ANOTHER

TWO YEARS.

5. THE OTHER MAJOR ASPECT OF SACAC ACTIVITIES IS ITS INFLUENCE ON
SINGAPORE'S PERCEPTION OF AMERICA AND AMERICANS. SINGAPOREANS WERE,
AND SOME STILL ARE, QUICK TO CONDEMN THE U.S. AS AN OVERLY PERMISSIVE,

DRUG-RIDDEN, NIHILISTIC SOCIETY. SACAC IS EVIDENCE OF CIVIC RESPONSI-
BILITY, OF THE CONCERN AND DETERMINATION OF AMERICANS TO DEAL
POSITIVELY WITH PROBLEMS WHICH SINGAPOREANS ARE BELATEDLY REALIZING
AREN'T UNIQUELY AMERICAN (HEROIN USE AMONG SINGAPORE YOUTHS IS ALSO
GROWING). THE IMAGE OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY, AND INDEED OF AMERICA,
HAS BEEN IMPROVED BY THIS PROGRAM. SACAC AND THE WHOLE RANGE OF CIVIC
ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY -- AND THE VERY FEW
DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS INVOLVING AMERICANS TO DATE -- HAVE BEEN SIG-
NIFICANT FACTORS IN THE EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH OUR SINGAPORE
HOSTS, DISPELLING IN PART THE DISTORTED PERCEPTIONS CONVEYED BY
THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE
SINGAPORE ANTI-NARCOTICS ASSOCIATION HAS ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION
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TURNED TO SACAC FOR ADVICE.

6. FROM THE INVENTORY FIGURES (PARA 2 F REF B) YOU WILL HAVE NOTICED
THAT THE OFFICIAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY SERVED BY SACAC IS LESS THAN
FOUR PERCENT OF THE TOTAL. THE IMPORTANCE OF SACAC ACTIVITIES
TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES IN SINGAPORE IS
NOT CONVEYED BY THAT FIGURE, AND ANY CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE USG
FUNDING SHOULD NOT BE TIED TO A PERCENTAGE STRAIGHT JACKET. THE

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DISTINCTION BETWEEN OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL AMERICANS IS LOST IN SINGAPORE, AND WHAT ONE ELEMENT DOES REFLECTS ON ALL.

7. I HOPE THAT THE INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE LOOKING INTO FUNDING REQUESTS FOR THE COMING YEAR WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE SUPPORT SACAC HAS GIVEN OUR OVER-ALL OBJECTIVES. CONSIDERING THE GEOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF SINGAPORE, THE PREVIOUS SAODAP GRANT OF $35,000 FOR TWO YEARS WAS A WISE INVESTMENT INDEED. MOREOVER, THE FACT THAT UNCLE SAM PROVIDED THE INITIAL IMPETUS TWO YEARS AGO WAS ESSENTIAL IN THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY'S SUCCESSFULIDRIVE TO RAISE FUNDS. IT WILL BE NO LESS IMPORTANT IN THE COMING YEAR.

8. AFTER CONSIDERING ALL THE FACTORS -- INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF HARD DRUGS, THE SUCCESSFUL SACAC PROGRAMS, SINGAPORE'S NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD AMERICAN SOCIETY, THE EFFECT ON THE INVESTMENT CLIMATE--

I HOPE THAT THE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER RELEVANT WASHINGTON AGENCIES WILL, AS I DO, REALIZE THE NEED FOR THE IMPORTANT WORK OF SACAC AND WILL SUPPORT IT AS MUCH AS IS FISCALLY POSSIBLE. CRONK

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